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Tribute to Anna Rutherford 1932-2001

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Abstract

The basis of my relationship with Anna was a shared year at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, and the co-editorship of Kunapipi for an all too brief period. Although Anna Rutherford's involvement and influence in Commonwealth literature took many and various forms, this brief essay is a tribute to her role as editor of Kunapipi from 1979-2001.

Tribute to Anna Rutherford 1932–2001

The basis of my relationship with Anna was a shared year at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, and the co-editorship of *Kunapipi* for an all too brief period. Although Anna Rutherford's involvement and influence in Commonwealth literature took many and various forms, this brief essay is a tribute to her role as editor of *Kunapipi* from 1979–2001. In the first number of *Kunapipi* (1979) Anna writes of her hopes for her new brain-child and explains the significance of the name she had chosen for the journal that would replace the *Commonwealth Newsletter*. *Kunapipi* is the name given the Great Mother and the Rainbow Serpent by the Aboriginal people of the Roper River: symbolic of creativity and regeneration. She quotes from her forward to *Common Wealth* (1971):

When one reads the literature of the Commonwealth one finds a constant interaction of forces, in opposition but also conjoined, for all struggle is a form of conjunction. In every development some part of the old must yield to the new for destruction is an essential part of the process of creation, essential for nothing stays alive unless it is continually being reborn and recreated by the imagination. This regenerative spirit seems to me to be one of the vital forces at work in Commonwealth writing today. It is for this reason that I have chosen the entwined serpent as the emblem for the cover. As such it is a symbol of the synthesis of opposing powers, of life-in-death and death-in-life, of inheritor and maker, of creation and destruction, of constant renewal, continuity and life. (5)

'I hope,' she continues, 'that *Kunapipi* is evidence of this regenerative spirit and that the new name and emblem are indications of my intentions' (5). After twenty-two years of imaginative and scholarly craftsmanship there can be no doubt that Anna's hopes for *Kunapipi* have been realised. The contents pages are a who's who of Commonwealth literature, both scholarly and creative, and the contents themselves are written in the spirit of intelligent, imaginative and compassionate inquiry.

It was typical of Anna that a declared intention was one that would necessarily be realised 'come hell or high water'. It was also typical that she should address the practical along with the ideal, concluding her first editorial with an explanation of the need to raise subscription rates. Some things do not change. If *Kunapipi* is to continue in its present form, and if the spirit of regeneration with which the journal began is to be perpetuated, I would ask you to help by taking out a 5-year subscription (AUD\$250) as a tribute to Anna. Names of those who contribute will be listed at the front of every issue. Those who have already made a 5-year pledge include I. Carerra, J. Delbaere, H. Gilbert, Z. Giles, G. Griffiths, B. Hickey, D. Jones, P. Love, H. Maes-Jelinek, R. McDougall, J. Strauss and A. Wimmer. If you cannot afford a 5-year subscription, I ask you either to renew your annual subscription or take out a new subscription. Details of subscription rates and address for correspondence are noted at the front of each issue.

Anne Collett



Anna in 4-colour separation
(To the unknown photographer — thank you)